

WEEKLY GRAPHIC.

\$1.50 Per Annum

KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI, FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 1883.

VOL. IV NO. 1.

THE HIRED GIRL.

By M. J. ROY.

AUTHOR OF "PRESTON FLAT MYSTERY,"
OR THE FORTUNES OF WALTER
BROWNFIELD.

CHAPTER X. IN JAIL.

Mr. Belcher, the sheriff, had a kind heart, and he did all in his power to cheer Helen.

"I hope Miss Lakeman it'll not be as bad as you think. I hope you will come out all right."

"No, no," said Helen her face growing more calm, and pale, "I know that shame, ruin and death will come out of this, I am in the power of persons bent upon my ruin, and no power on earth can save me."

"Who do you think is bent upon your ruin?"

"Mr. Arnold and family."

"Why great goodness, why should they want to ruin a poor girl like you?"

Helen was silent. She could not answer his question, though she knew an answer for it. She could not tell him the Arnold's had determined to have the educated and accomplished Warren Stuart a member of their family, and that the pretty face of the hired girl was in the way. That Helen Lakeman arrested and disgraced for a crime, would lose her beauty even in the eyes of her infatuated lover.

She dare not tell the sheriff what her honest convictions said were living truths, for if she did they would not be believed.

Helen was silent. The sheriff waited for her to speak. Belcher had been an officer long enough to regard every person arrested as a criminal. Of course this girl was guilty. He felt very sorry for her. She was young, beautiful and intelligent, and she had great temptation to steal. He resolved in his own mind to intercede with the court and prosecuting attorney and have her punishment as light as possible.

It would go much lighter with her he knew, if she would 'own the thing right up' and 'make a clean breast of it all. He regarded it as his duty to advise the girl to do so.

"Helen," he said in as kindly and fatherly tone, as he could command, "you are a young girl, and perhaps know nothing about law."

She bowed her head to receive the advice which she knew would come.

"I feel sorry for you on account this trouble you have got into," the sheriff went on, "and I want to talk to you as if you were my own daughter."

The carriage was rolling along over a smooth piece of wood and the sheriff knew every word the girl said by way of confession, could be heard by the driver, provided she denied it afterward. The sheriff determined to work up the case if possible.

Helen was still silent, and he continued.

"You are young, thrown upon the world without an adviser or friend and now I can help you any I would be glad to do so. Your crime is a serious one to begin with, and what is more, you will be convicted of it. The proof against you is overwhelming and there is no power—no lawyer on earth who can make a jury believe you are innocent."

He paused to see the effects of his kind remarks upon the girl. Helen was silent. Her face was no paler than before, and there were no visible evidences of an increase in her emotions.

"Feeling for you as I do Helen I think it my duty to advise you to make a clean breast of the whole thing. Own up to it, like a woman and throw your self on the mercy of the court."

He paused because the white face of his fair prisoner was turned upon him, and her eyes were blazing with a strange light. Her look was one of enquiry, at least so he determined to make himself understood.

"I mean Helen that it is best for you when arraigned to plead guilty, admit taking the bracelet, and I think we can get you off easily."

For a moment the white face was upturned to his, and then the sweet sad voice said:

"Would you have me admit a lie?"

"Oh no, no, no," said the sheriff, "but you know—"

It makes no difference what you may say they will believe it."

"Believe what?" said Helen her eyes having a light very unnatural. "I cannot help what people say of me. I am not the first girl who has been ruined by the thoughtless or intentional slanders of people who have some claims to goodness; but I am innocent in the face of Heaven. I know my crime is a felony. It is what lawyers call 'grand larceny' and I will be sent to the penitentiary, but I would not admit a lie, to save myself from all this great degradation."

Mr. Belcher now discovered that he had no ordinary personage to deal with. She was either innocent or the most brazen criminal he had ever met with. Never had he known one actually guilty to assume her manner and tone.

The sheriff was silent. He was thinking, of course she was guilty, she must be guilty. Judge Arnold's family stood too high in social circles, to have made a false report on this girl, and the Judge was too shrewd to be mistaken. Of course the girl was guilty. Judge Arnold could have no deep game to play in the matter. The girl was poor and friendless and he had expressed himself as regretting that it had occurred.

Then the girl must be guilty. He looked at Helen. She met his eyes with an unwavering gaze. Her manner said: "I have done nothing to merit this, and can not be made to bow my head in shame. You may punish me if you will, but you can not break my spirit."

"She is certainly a case," thought the sheriff turning his face toward the coach window. "Oh, I do wish she would plead guilty. She's foolish if she don't." The last was muttered loud enough for Helen to hear. She quickly responded:

"It may be foolish to plead not guilty, Mr. Belcher, but it will be right. I would rather be right than to be wise."

The sheriff was silenced. The village was soon reached and the rockaway drove up to the office of the magistrate.

Squire Bluffers had his office in an old frame building on the ground floor, not many rods removed from the post office, which was on the corner of the square. The justice of the peace was a portly man with iron grey hair, and a pair of spectacles upon his nose. He was writing in his docket on the entrance of the sheriff with his prisoner.

The old justice looked up on their entrance, and then pushed his spectacles upon his forehead. No sooner did his eyes rest upon the fair prisoner than he started. "Squire Bluffers was a man with a big kind heart, and to see one so young and handsome as Helen Lakeman fallen, touched him."

"This is the person," said the sheriff gruffly. Since he had found Helen so much more hardened than he had expected, he had lost much of his sympathy for her.

The justice in the absence of the prosecuting attorney, read the complaint to her, and asked her whether she was guilty or not guilty.

"Not guilty," was the response.

The magistrate folded up the complaint and putting it in a large envelope, thrust it back in a pigeon hole.

There was a few moment's silence when the justice taking up his pen said:

"Have you a lawyer?"

"No sir," Helen answered.

"Have you money to employ a lawyer?"

"No sir, I had but two dollars and fifty cents, and I gave that to my little brother when I left him."

"Do you want an examination now to-day, or would you rather wait?"

Helen felt prompted to ask for a delay and she did so.

"Can you give bond for your appearance here in ten days?"

"I think not," Helen answered. "I know but very few persons, and those I do not know I would not like to ask to go on my bond."

"I will make it small, if you will make an effort."

"It would be no use," said Helen sadly.

"I don't like to send a nice little girl like you to jail," said the justice with a flattering smile.

"I do not like to go there," said Helen brushing a tear from her cheek, "but I suppose it can't be helped. It may be that some time the world will know I am innocent though it is impossible to convince people now."

"I will continue your case for ten days my good girl, in the meanwhile I will have to commit you. Mr. Bridges, the jailer is a very nice man, and he may not lock you up in a cell, but let you stay with his family."

The suggestion of the justice seemed to strike the sheriff favorably. He said he would see Bridges about it. Mr. Bridges, the jailer, had the front part of the jail converted into a dwelling, where himself and family lived.

He was found and "the thing" talked over. If it could be done, he had no objection. Mr. Belcher assured him that he had the opinion of the justice of the peace on the subject, and that it could be done with propriety.

The result of their conference on the matter was that they went to the justice of the peace, where Helen with her bonnet drawn down over her face out of modesty not from sense of shame, sat.

"Here Jack," said the justice taking up a paper. "Here is a commitment

for Helen Lakeman. Her case is continued for ten days. You might let her stay in your house if you have no cell for her, as your house is a part of the jail."

"Will you try to get away Helen," said the jailer to the girl, provident I don't lock you up."

"Would you believe any promise I would make you," the girl asked.

"Well yes, I might."

"No one believes what I say. I am innocent of any crime and yet no one believes me. Even the sheriff insists on my pleading guilty and admitting a crime I never committed."

"No I don't," said the sheriff, a little nettled. "I wanted you to plead guilty if you committed the offense; it would be better for you in the end."

"Promise me that you will make no effort to escape," said the jailer, "and you need not enter the walls of the jail."

Helen gave her consent and was told to "come on."

She arose and followed the jailer to his house. There a number of curious eyes turned upon her as she went to the jail for the news of her arrest had spread all over the village.

She reached the house of the jailer and was ushered in.

CHAPTER XIV. CLARENCE AND ROSA FORM A BRAVE RESOLUTION AND CARRY IT OUT.

The news of Helen Lakeman's arrest spread like wild fire all over the Sandy Fork neighborhood.

Mrs. Arnold, with her head high in the air, in her endeavor to see under her glasses, was ready to answer any and all questions in regard to the matter.

Mothers Tarrum and Grundy called on her for their supply of news, and started about from house to house to peddle it out.

The next Sunday, there being preaching at the Sandy Fork school house, the news was scattered generally. Mother Tarrum, who sat next to Mrs. Evans, said:

"Didn't you hear about that Lakeman girl. She stole some money at Judge Arnold's."

"Money! I heard it was a bracelet."

"No—it was money."

"Who told you?"

"Mother Grundy."

"Who told her?"

"Mrs. Arnold."

"I think there must have been some mistake about it," said Mrs. Evans.

"I'd like to know how," said Mother Tarrum. "There can't be no mistake about it."

"Oh, the bracelet must have been lost and put among Helen's things by mistake."

"No it wasn't," said the tattler, shaking her head, "no it wasn't. She stole it, I know she stole it!"

"But Helen was such a good girl. There can't be any doubt as to her innocence."

"You think that thing was a good girl? I asked mother Tarrum who seemed a special agent to slander Helen."

"Yes."

"Well she came to Mrs. Arnold's way in the night with a strange man. Do you call that a nice girl. She's the—she's the worst girl we had in the neighborhood." The eyes of Mother Tarrum sparkled with indignation, and the hairy mole on her cheek trembled with anger.

"Is that so?" asked Mrs. Evans.

"I guess it is," Mrs. Arnold tells it. Not three seats away Mother Grundy was harranging Mrs. Taylor.

"Wonder what Warren Stuart thinks of his gal, now, eh? She's bad enough I guess. I guess young men who throw away such girls as Hallie Arnold for a kitchen gal, is sure to get beat. She is just as bad as kin be, and is now locked up in jail for a thief."

There was one family to whom the news of Helen's fall came like a thunderbolt. It was the Stuarts.

When Mrs. Stuart first heard it she burst into tears and said:

"It's all our fault, Jacob! it's all our fault; we drove her to it."

"I don't see how we are to blame," said the farmer, trying to find some way of relieving himself from any obligations to the friendless girl.

"We drove her away with her poor little crippled brother, out into the world. The temptation was too great. Oh, who could blame her?"

"I can," said the farmer; "nice mess we like to get into, and it's a blessing we got rid of her just when we did, or we'd have had a thief in our family. She had the wool completely pulled over Warren's eyes."

Mrs. Stuart wept a few moments in silence and then said:

"But think, Jacob, of the poor, friendless child, for she is scarcely more than a child, and of the charge she had upon her."

"Oh, yes, I know—"

"What do you suppose has become of little Amos?"

"I don't know; I guess he will be taken care of."

At this moment Clarence entered the room. He had just come in at noon from plowing. This was on Monday, the day after Mothers Tarrum and Grundy's issue of information. Clarence had not been to church and had only been told an hour ago by Henry Snuckley, who was riding down the lane and called to come to the fence and rest. The honest face of the boy was red with anger.

"Father," he gasped, "have you heard about Helen?"

"What about her?" demanded the other gruffly.

"She's been arrested for stealin'."

"Well, what of it?"

"It's a lie, that's all," thundered Clarence, in a voice full of fury.

"Have you gone crazy," asked his father in amazement.

"No, I'm not; but whoever says that Helen Lakeman stole that bracelet is a liar! I don't care who they are."

"Well, Judge Arnold swore she did," said the father triumphantly.

"Then Judge Arnold swore to a positive falsehood."

"That's a grave accusation sir, what object has Judge Arnold?"

"A big one, and he's set up a job in the matter as sure as I live; the old thief."

"Clarence behave yourself," said the father. "Have some respect for your mother and me, if you have none for yourself. I would like to know what object Arnold could have."

"His girl is half dead after Warren, and Helen had cut her out, now if they can't get her out, she'll be a burden on their hands."

"Oh hush you simpleton."

"I am no simpleton at all father. I know more about this than you. I'll prove it yet before it's over with. The last thing brother Warren said to me was to see that Helen was not imposed upon, for his sake. He foresaw the persecutions that were coming on that poor girl's head, and tried to prepare against them. First Misses Arnold went tramping all over the country with a pack of lies and caused you to discharge her, then when the poor girl was driven from shelter with her crippled brother, a rain storm raging and a dark night coming on, she set her trap to catch her. Helen stopped at her house for shelter and the next day was arrested."

"You are making a fool of yourself, Clarence," said Mr. Stuart.

"Well I'll make a bigger fool out of myself than I ever have."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I am going to see Helen out in this. Old King James Arnold will find out before long that the girl he thought so friendless will have two friends, I am one, and brother Warren the other."

Mr. Stuart was completely dumfounded at Clarence's announcement.

"Helen is in jail for lack of bonds, if it was Tom Scuttle for wife beatin' you would be ready to go on his bond. But I will go on Helen's bond."

Clarence turned and walked away. In the hall he met his sister Rosa, her eyes wet with weeping.

"Oh brother I am so glad you are going to help poor Helen. Do go at once—let me go to help poor Helen. Do go at once—let me go with you."

"You shall. I'm going to take my own horse and buggy and go to Newton this evening."

"I will see mother."

"Get ready if you are going mother or no mother," cried Clarence in whose heart the spirit of rebellion was powerful.

The resolution of Rosa became as strong as her brother, though out of a sense of duty she notified her mother.

"Do go, Rosa," Mrs. Stuart said much to the girls' astonishment. "Tell Helen I believe her guiltless, and I want her to forgive me."

In fifteen minutes later, Clarence and his sister were in the farmer's open buggy rattling down the hill toward Newton.

CHAPTER XV. MR. STYLES AND MR. LAYMAN

Helen Lakeman was a truly converted christian. Being naturally of a religious turn of mind, and have christian parents she early embraced religion, and became a member of the church.

The neglect she had received, her many trials and persecutions, would have made any other than a true christian a hater of mankind. To the disgrace of church members (not churches) be it said, most of her persecutions came from them.

Her parents were Presbyterians and she a member of that church. Her last promise to her parents was that she would care for the unfortunate little brother, and live as near as she could up to her christian faith.

Her strong faith in Christ and sweet temper, saved her from bitterly reproaching her persecutors, and the blessed promises in the Bible were ever a consolation to her.

She found Mrs. Bridges the jailer's wife, a very kind woman. One not altogether incredulous as to what ever body said, and yet not ready to believe as men jailors, that every person accused is a criminal.

She had heard Helen's story before she came to the jail, and declared to herself.

"I pity the poor child who was struggling for her little brother, and she is more to be pitied than blamed even if she took the bracelet."

She greeted the down cast girl kindly on her entering the house, giving Helen the first real sympathy she had received since her terrible misfortune.

Taking both small hands in her own and gazing into the sweet face and large blue eyes, Mrs. Bridges said:

"There is some mistake here Jack I know there is. This poor child never did a wrong in her life."

Helen burst into tears clasped her arms about the neck of the jailer's wife and fell sobbing on her bosom. It was so sweet after receiving such cold cruel treatment to find one warm sympathetic heart on which she could rely.

Mrs. Bridges consoled her, kissed away her tears, and told her to trust in the Lord and she would come out of all her troubles triumphantly in the end.

Everything the good woman could do to alleviate the suffering of Helen was done. She assured her that the world would come to know her innocence and she would be loved and respected more than ever before, for she had been tried by fire.

Helen took her place as one of the jailer's family and Mrs. Bridges kept her constantly at her side. When the prisoner took down the family Bible and opening to Deuteronomy, Fourth chapter 30th and 31st verses, she felt that the hand of God had surely directed her to the blessed promise contained in those two verses.

"When thou art in tribulation and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God and shall be obedient unto his voice; (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he swore unto them."

Helen closed the Bible and clasping her hands remained for a moment in silent prayer. How light and joyous her heart at that moment. A true christian can not be downcast and sad. If death sweeps away every earthly friend, they know they are only gone to a better land. If clouds of darkness, sorrow and suffering surround them, they know that there is a Heaven where clouds, darkness, sorrow and suffering never come.

Helen was happy at that moment. Her tears were dried and a sweet smile was upon her face. If she were sent to the penitentiary she would go cheerfully and pray God to have mercy on the false witnesses who had worked her ruin. She could forgive even the Arnolds. She could pray God to forgive them, and bless them with happiness. Do you doubt this readers? then you know nothing of a truly converted christian heart. There was no bitterness in Helen's soul. She was Christ-like.

It was on Monday when Mr. Styles the prosecuting attorney came to see her. Mr. Styles was a man who always went into a case to win, regardless of the right or wrong he might do. Here was a young girl to be sure, one who had many temptations no doubt, but who had violated the law. He determined to prosecute her.

Of course youth and beauty would be in her favor. Then he would not insist on a long sentence. Two years for a bracelet would do, but in order to obtain clemency from Mr. Styles, she must plead guilty.

Helen sat in silence and listened to the oily words of the shrewd lawyer. He began then a series of questions, which would have entangled any one less innocent than herself. She answered him in a straightforward manner, giving him a history of her life down to the commission of the offense.

"Now Helen," said the lawyer at last becoming exasperated, "you are very shrewd; you are the shrewdest, that I ever met; but it will avail you nothing. We have the proof solid against you. Come now, is it not better to confess up and get only two years, than go to trial and get ten?"

"Mr. Styles," said Helen. "I will not confess to a falsehood, though you sentence me to penal servitude for life."

Mr. Styles went away scratching his head in a puzzled way, and declaring she was the shrewdest and most hardened criminal he had ever seen. Wise indeed he must have been, not to be able to distinguish between unimpaired innocence, and the brazen defiance of crime.

He was scarcely gone ere a light vehicle rattled up to the door of the jail, and to her surprise, Helen saw Clarence and Rosa Stuart jump out.

Rosa, tears streaming down her cheeks, burst into the room where Helen was and clasped her in her arms. Helen smiled, a sweet serene smile of innocent happiness.

"Oh Helen, Helen, my dear sister—for you should be my sister—how you have suffered."

"No, no darling Rosa, the Lord has been very good to me. He has always given me strength beyond my trials."

"An angel still," cried the rough Clarence, entering and taking Helen's hand. "I don't know that I ought to touch you," he said, the moisture gathering in his manly eye. "It seems to me that a great, rough, wicked fellow like me, ought not to touch a being too good for this earth. Now here he has been ever since I heard about you, a cussin' and swearin' at ready to go over to old Arnold's and lick him, and here you are forgivin' everybody, and jest lookin' happy."

"We may suffer and still be happy Clarence," said Helen a smile of ineffable sweetness upon her face. "There is no need for any one being without happiness. Oh there is so much here, and she laid her hand reverently on the Bible."

Rosa kissed her again, and again, declaring she never would desert her, while Clarence was dumfounded. His earnest zeal wanted to "punch some body's head," but Helen forbid that.

He must do something, though it was difficult to tell what that was.

"Oh, yes I'll go on her bond," he said. He took up his hat and dashed around to the magistrates. Here his hopes were dashed to the ground on being informed that no minor could be accepted as bail for the prisoner. But the girl was innocent, Clarence declared. She was an angel, one whom he knew to be an angel.

The magistrate smiled and said he had seen a good many and all were angels at first. Some never acknowledged it, and she might be one of the kind but there could really be no mistake about it. She was an unfortunate girl, had his sympathy too, but he guessed she was guilty.

Clarence left in despair and went to consult a lawyer, Mr. John Layman had the reputation of being a fair lawyer, and he would employ him.

"Good morning Clarence," said Mr. Layman stroking his long black whiskers on the entrance of the young farmer.

"I came Mr. Layman to get you to attend to a case," said Clarence sitting in a chair near the lawyer. Mr. Layman laid aside a news paper he was reading and thrusting his hands in his pockets was attention.

"You have heard of Helen Lakeman's arrest. I want you to defend her."

The lawyer was soon employed, Clarence agreeing to pay his fee. The two set out at once for the jail where Mr. Layman was introduced to his fair client.

Helen then proceeded to tell all she knew of the unfortunate event. The gold bracelet was found in her carpet bag but how it got there, she did not know. The lawyer listened to her story and then put her through a most rigid cross examination.

"How did the bracelet get in your possession?" he finally asked.

"I kin tell ye," said Clarence quickly. "Ye see brother Warren and Helen here were to get married. Well they told lies about Helen, and mother discharged her, and then the Arnold's set up this job on her so that Warren would marry that red headed, freckled face Hal Arnold."

Helen tried to stop the impulsive youth, but there was no stopping him whatever. He was determined to tell all. The lawyer smiled and said that he hardly thought they were that bad. He made some notes in his book, and left, promising to call on his client next day.

"Have you written to Warren about this?" Rosa asked.

"No," said Helen, "I could not."

"We must write to him now. We will write together and tell him all. Helen was at last persuaded to join the sister in sending the letter. It was written full of tender truthfulness, and sealed.

"This will bring him here," said Rosa. "Now Clarence what is the number of the street?"

Clarence felt in his pockets a moment and with a look of dismay said:

"I'm blest if I ain't lost it!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

An Essay in a Street Car.

She had been reading an essay somewhere and was going home on a street car, accompanied by a miss, a middle-aged dame and two youths. There were a dozen other passengers in the car who were not aware that she had been reading an essay, and she determined to enlighten them, so in a half-pitched voice that could have been heard for blocks, she screamed:

"Oh, dear! You don't know how glad I was when I finished reading my essay. I was really quite nervous, I assure you, for there were thirteen whole pages of it. I actually sat up all night to write it. It's a terribly trying position to get up before a cultured audience and read an original essay of that length. How did I do?"

Dame—"Just splendid."

Miss—"Be-autiful."

First youth—"Never saw you do better."

Second youth—"Quite well."

She (in a tone of astonishment and disgust, with calliope power)—"Quite well!" (With scorn) "Perhaps you think you could do better?" (Beseechingly) "You were out among the audience. Now do, please, tell me what they said about me!"

Second youth—"Some of them criticized your enunciation."